THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) is monitoring rain water quality and long term averages in chemical composition thereof across the country through a network of 10 Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) stations as per Guidelines of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). These GAW stations are located in Allahabad (U.P.), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Kodaikanal (Kerala), Minicoy (Island in the Arabian Sea), Mohanbari (Assam), Nagpur & Pune (Maharashtra), Portblair (Andeman & Nicobar), Srinagar (J & K) and Visakhapatnam (A.P.)

As per IMD data, precipitation weighted mean sulphate and nitrate concentrations are more in pre-*Monsoon* shower which is attributed to both manmade and natural reasons. These concentrations subsequently decrease as *Monsoon* proceeds.

(c) and (d) Conclusive Impact Assessment Studies of rain water chemistry on ground-water and surface water *vis-a-vis* increase in the rate of occurance of Alzheimer disease as a result thereof are not available.

Various measure taken for checking and eliminating the air pollution are:

- notification of ambient air quality standards and regular monitoring thereof across the country;
- notification of emission standards for various categories of industry including refinery, thermal power plants, etc. and Diesel Generator (DG) Sets;
- regular monitoring of industrial units for compliance of emission standards;
- encouraging cleaner production technologies;
- use of beneficiated coal in thermal power plants;
- notification of mass emission norms for the vehicles at the manufacturing stage;
- improved Pollution Under Control (PUC) Certificate System for in-use vehicles; and
- introduction of clean fuel like LPG/CNG in public transport in selected metro cities.

Construction of road by China

†1454. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a road is being constructed by China in the Indian unoccupied area;

(b) whether construction of a metalled road upto the base camp of Everest with a cost of 2 crore dollars is a cause of concern with the security point of view;

(c) whether the Minister of Cultural Affairs in China Shri Sun Zia Zeng has confirmed the continuation of construction work on this 108 km long National Highway;

(d) whether this construction of road would destory the age old ecology of Himalaya; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(e) whether any discussion on this matter has been made between the Chinese and Indian Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Government has seen media reports stating that China plans to construct a highway on Mount Everest located on the border between Nepal and Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China so as to facilitate the carriage of the Olympic torch to various places in the People's Republic of China as part of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, at an estimated cost of US$ 19.7 million. According to media reports, the Chinese side has said that they would be mindful of environmental concerns while doing so. Government keep a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's national interest and take all necessary measures to safeguard these interests.

Suicide attack in Afghanistan

1455. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of suicide attack on a convoy of the Border Roads Organization (BRO) in Afghanistan, recently;

(b) if so, the details of causalities held due to attack on a convoy of the BRO;

(c) whether the Union Government has sent a team to review security arrangements and indentify additional measures to protect Indians in the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country; and

(d) if so, the details of the reports submitted by the team; and

(e) to what extent the Indians working in Afghanistan are being protected by security agencies?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes. On January 3, 2008, a BRO convoy was attacked by militants resulting in death of two Indian personnel and injuries to 5 others. Nineteen Afghan Civil Security personnel/civilians were also killed and 25 injured in the attack.

(c) Yes.

(d) and (e) The security of Indian nationals in Afghanistan is under Government's constant review and scrutiny. Government are also in constant touch with the Government and Afghanistan with regard to security for Indian in Afghanistan. In addition, Government have deployed Indian security personnel for the Zaranj-Delaram road project being executed by Border Roads Organisation in the Nimroz province of Afghanistan. Indian nationals registered with the Embassy are regularly advised on the prevailing security scenario in the country.